Of the five texts below, two are original writings, by writers Velma Pollard and Desmond Egan; the other three are transcriptions of field recordings. With the exception of Egan's poem, they are published here for the first time. These short texts speak to us with authentic voices from the social, cultural and linguistic margins of the anglophone world.

USA

The following enthralling narrative is by ex-slave Laura Smalley (born in East Texas circa 1855). It tells of an encounter her mother had with Native Americans in the early 19th century. If the mother was about nine or ten in this story («big enough to handle water») we can estimate from other biographical details that it took place not later than 1846, soon after Anglo-Black settlement of eastern Texas had begun, settled mainly from the lower Mississippi area. Both of Laura Smalley's parents had come from this area.[1] It is intriguing to think that the incident could probably be dated to the very day on the basis of the spectacular meteorite shower.

The vivid telling of the tale makes visualisation of the incident very easy, set amongst the rolling wooded landscape of eastern Texas. The native Americans are in the last years of their freedom in this area. At the break of day they come to the spring they have probably known for generations, only to find it enclosed on the plantation. This, like the star shower perhaps, is a sign of their changing fortunes. The story involves the elements of air, fire and water, and also bread (earth), and this in itself confers a powerful elemental attraction. This previously untranscribed, unpublished passage is a gem, too, linguistically, since it contains a number of archaic features, providing a sample of a more basilectal level of 19th century Black American speech. The narrative begins when the fieldworker asks Laura Smalley if she had met any «wild Indians».

1. See Bailey et al. (1991: 68).

The morning the stars fell (African American English)

LS: *I núse yèar mámá tálk ábárúm* [I used to hear mama talk about them] *when say sh..when she was a chile, he* [she] *say dat uh, one mornin she went out an Ole Mistress - she'd big nough you know for to handle water - an said when she got to de door, open de door, that the stars was fallin. Now when stars was fallin (th)at mornin, an said she didn know, said Ole Mistress looked out an says: Dont you go out there! She says uh star(s)..She says they jus went like meat fry`n you know, she said the whole Earth was jus, jus uh, lit-up you know. Said they jus go:n like meat fry: ffwffwffwffw. Jus fore day.* En said dat uh, when she went to go tuh duh spring, an the stars fell, say when they quit fall, twas daylight. An say she met some Injuns, India..Indians, down (th)ere - you *know they pack* [carry] *water f'om a spring she said. An say she met some wild Indian. An they had, Ole Missus' cook had give uh* [given her] *a piece of bread, an dey give uh duh, dey give um de beads you know, give um, give uh, give uh some beads. Some beads you know, an took the bread, an evi...*[FW: Oh!]

Yaassum [Yes sir] *, an took the bread f'om uh. An said evitime she go a step in front, or go a walk they des* [just] *step in front uv uh, evitime then she go a walk they step in front uv uh* [every time she started walking / tried to walk away they stepped in front of her].

An said findly [finally], *at last dey had the bread up an retch* [reached] *the han back you know, an took the, took the beads way f'om uh. En dat said they was wild. Take it away f'om uh. An say she went back to the house, cryin, went back to the house cryin, said that, she tole she met some people who took uh bread, en give uh some beads an took the beads away from uh. An das only ever I hear talk of wild Injuns...Indians, in muh life. I never hear talk of no Indian(s). Aint never seed one.*

Library of Congress archive 5497A. Recorded by John Henry Faulk in 1941, under the auspices of the WPA government scheme.

David Sutcliffe
Universitat Pompeu Fabra

[Editor's note: Laura Smalley's self-corrections (*Injuns - Indians*, and *give um - give uh*) show a degree of self-monitoring on her part which makes some of the features in the text specially remarkable for their mixed character: standard past verb forms (*said, looked out, didn't know, met, went, had, tol(d), took*); common nonstandard forms like regularised *seed*, levelled past forms *give*, *come*, or singular/plural *was;* as well as unmarked verb forms which could be AAVE or creole - 3rd person singular *say* (in variation with *says* and/or *said*) and *go* (perhaps in variation with *went*), *take* (beside more frequent *took*), or *hear* as a past (*I never hear*). Moreover some features look as if they could only belong to a creole system: *he /um* referring to Laura Smalley's mother (note the switches *she - he - she* in the first two lines, and the *her - um - her* variation with *give* . This is reminiscent of creole 3rd person singular genderless pronoun forms *i / im-um*. Likewise *go a step* and *go a walk* ('started walking') seem to show a continuous aspect marker *a* followed by an uninflected verb, a feature typical of some creoles; *when they quit fall* ('stopped falling') shows a similar uninflected verb pattern.]

(For more on the topic, see D. Sutcliffe in this volume, 127-145.)

Ireland

The following poem is from *Famine* by Desmond Egan (Goldsmith Press, 1997), reprinted here by kind permission of the author. Although written in standard English, the poem's voice recalls another margin: the oppressed and starving Ireland of the nineteenth century, and the progressive destruction of the Gaelic culture and language.

I

the stink of famine
hangs in the bushes still
in the sad celtic hedges

you can catch it
down the lines of our landscape
get its taste on every meal

listen there is famine in our music

famine behind our faces

it is only a field away
has made us all immigrants
guilty for having survived

has separated us from language
cut us from our culture
built blocks around belief

left us on our own
ashamed to be seen
walking out beauty so
honoured by our ancestors

but fostered now to peasants
the drivers of motorway diggers
unearthing bones by accident
under the disappearing hills

Jamaica

The following text is a parable, or 'history' as its writer, Velma Pollard, prefers to call it. Starting off in an acrolect standard English it quickly turns into a very basilect Jamaican creole.

Friend

I was a stranger in the place

stop there on the way to somewhere else because night catch me.

The morning I wake up[1] *a man come up to me and say a*[2] *have something to show you that a been keeping years now to find somebody to show it to. Why is me him show?*[3]

How him know say[4] *me woulda understand it?*

Me read it and me laugh and me no think nothing more bout it.

Another time me go to foreign[5]*. As me reach*[6] *me see the man. Nex day me hear say*[4] *them have something that everybody shoulda try see but you have to drive car go there and you know me no drive a foreign*[5]*. The man come up to me and smile and hold on to me like me and him a fren so me say to him do me a favour noh*

drive me and me fren dem[7] *go look pon the something. Him say alright as long as him can carry fi him*[8] *fren dem too. So we go.*

After that me no see the man fi[9] *lang lang time till me go a*[10] *wan foreign*[11] *near to where fi him yaad de*[12]*. When me do see him him say him know say*[4] *me never intend fi mek*[13] *him see me, for me no sen come tell*[14] *him say me a come*[15]*. Anyway*

him still talk to me and say me mus spen likkle[16] *time with him. Me say alright. Him carry me a wan place me cant describe it how it pretty*[17]*. A*[18] *pure gravel and rock and although a*[18] *seaside*[19] *no sand no di*[12] *deh*[20]*. And the rock dem*[7] *have pattern like batik and tie-dye. We sidung*[21] *and talk - mostly him talk and me listen bout some sad sad things what happen to him. And sometime we just keep quiet and consider. Me cant describe to nobody how it feel likesay*[22] *me know the man from me born*[17] *and me no know him you know.*

The next time we meet, people see how me an him talk nice and them say something ina something but not a thing no in deh more than me and him just move easy like how Lorna say you have flour and somebody else have water and the two of unuh[23] *coulda all make bread together but a*[18] *more like him have clay and me have water and we make a nice big yabba pot together.*

Him say me woulda did like him if me did know him when him did young[24]*. What you think him mean by that? Him mean him agree with me that we can just be friends good friends and thats that.*

And me say give thanks for me no want fi know him bad ways how much woman him have how him beat him wife and how him foot big and dirty and maybe him no want fi know how me careless careless and nasty so it better we just gwaan[25] *sidung a tree root and talk or sidung a seaside and gaze everytime we meet one another.*

Velma Pollard
University of the West Indies

[Editor's note: Most of the typical creole features of this very basilectal text (with a few standard 'acrolectal' features especially before the writer 'warms up') are noted below. Not commented on are the typical verb forms uninflected for tense, person, aspect, and the typical general pronoun forms (*mi*, *him*) for all case functions.
[1]'In the morning when I woke up'. [2]'I'. [3]'Why is (it) me he shows (it to)'. [4]complementiser: 'that'. [5]*a foreign* 'abroad'. [6]'arrived'. [7]*dem* associative plural marker. [8]*fi* optional possessive marker: *fi dem* 'his'. [9]'for'; can also mean 'to'. [10]'to'. [11]'a certain foreign country'. [12]*de* (also *di*): locative 'be' so, 'where his home was'. [13]*fi mek* 'to let'. [14]*sen come tell him* 'send (a message) here to tell him'. [15]*say me a come* 'that I was coming' (*a* is progressive aspect marker). [16]'little'. [17]*how it pretty* 'how pretty it was': no copula. [18]here *a* has yet another function, that of copula 'be': '(it) was'. [19]'beach'. [20]deh 'there': 'no sand was there/(there) was no sand there'. [21]*sidung* 'sat down'. [22]*likesay* 'as though'. [23]*unuh* plural 'you' (of West African origin). [24]*did* is the completive aspecct marker for verbs in the three cases (in the last one there is no copula with adjectives). [25]*gwaan* 'go'.]

Guyana

Indentured laborers from India (also known as *bound coolies*) were taken to British Guiana from 1838 to 1917 to work on sugar plantations. Those from the Tamil region, known as *Madrasi coolies*, took with them their worship of the Hindu Mother Goddess in her regional form of Mariamma. This is referred to as *Madrasi religion* and is most commonly known as *Kalimai Puja* («Mother Kali worship»), perhaps because of contact with north Indians in Guyana as well as through association between Mari and Kali in Tamil Nadu

before emigration. The worship is caracterized by ecstatic states of consciousness and healing practices. Uncle Jamsie Naidoo, Kali priest and renowned Guyanese devotee of the goddess, was born in Guyana toward the end of the indentureship period. In February, 1988, at his home in Albion village, he related to me the origin of Kali worship in Guyana as told to him by his father, who participated in the event he describes.

*How Kali Puja Came to Guyana (Guyanese creole)**

De people who come from India, dis people brin de book when dey come from India, an when dey come in Albion dey come as a bung. When dey come to bung, dey work six day per week. One or maybe two month after, one o de chile sick an no docta cannot cure em, so when dey dun wuk Sunday, everyone go to de river bank an dey chan de name o de Mudda, dey chan de name o de Mudda, an pray to de Mudda o Ganga:

Oh Divine Mudda o Ganga, we lef India an come so far an we come in a differen contry an we have problem, do you please come an receive our prayer an shower you blessin an bless we. O Mudda o Ganga come, we have problem.

Den Mudda o Ganga came an one o de Guru start to read de mantr from de Mariamma Talatu an one o dem get vibration. Mudda came pon em, an all o dem bow to em an bow to em.

Oh Divine Mudda, can you tell we what's wrong?

You all forget me when you come from India, you forget me, you don want to do me puja, so I mek dis chile sick…go to a clean place where you see plenty cattle set an mek me temple deh, an pray fo Mudda o Kali, get a bucket water wid dye, neem an flower an bathe dis chile, an all de sick will gon.

So dey do an so dey done and dey say from day on dey gon do Mudda puja from da deh deh time. So puja come to dis contry.

(Translation) The people who came from India brought the book with them when they came. They came to Albion Estate as "bound coolies." When they came to work as bound coolies, they worked six days a week. One or maybe two months after [they arrived] one of the children fell sick and no doctor could cure it [the child]. So when they had finished working(,) on Sunday they all went to the river bank and they chanted the name of the Mother, they chanted the name of the Mother, and prayed to Mother Ganges:

Divine Mother Ganges, we left India and came so far. We came to a different country and we have problems. Please listen to our prayers and shower your blessings [on us] and bless us. Oh Mother Ganges, please come [to us]. We have problems.

Then Mother Ganges came and one of the gurus began to read the mantra from the Mariamma Talatu and one of them became ecstatic. [The] Mother entered his body and everybody bowed down before her again and again.

Oh Divine Mother, can you tell us what is wrong?

You all forgot me when you left India, you've forgotten me, you don't want to worship me, so I made this child sick. Now, go to a clean place where you see plenty of cattle and make my temple there and pray to Mother

(*) Recorded on video. Original footage in the collection of the *Smithsonian Human Studies Film Archives* (*Hail Mother Kali Project*. Stephanos Stephanides. 1988.).

Kali. Get a bucket of water with tumeric, neem leaves and flowers, bathe the child [with it], and all the sickness will go away.

So they did and so it came about [i.e., the child was cured]. And they promised from that day they would worship the Mother from that time on. That is how puja came to this country.

Stephanos Stephanides
University of Cyprus

[Editor's note: In this previously unpublished text, we find some typical creole features: lack of inflected verbs (for person or tense), with the exception of *came* (twice) and *done* (*and so dey done*); another appearance of *dun* (spelt differently to distinguish it from *done*) in *when dey dun wuk* acts as a completive aspect marker. Genderless pronoun *em* refers to the child, the guru and the godess; *we* is both subject and object; *you* is the unmarked possessive. There is no noun plural, and the copula is deleted, as in *one o de chile sick.*]

Papua New Guinea

This is a traditional story from the Eastern Highlands explaining the origin of the name of the girl's village.The Tok Pisin speaker was a 15-year-old high school student from Henganofi in the Eastern Highlands Province recorded at Henganofi in December 1990. Her parents speak the Kafe language, but she grew up on a government station speaking Tok Pisin as her main language.

*The Naming of the Village of Kronkonte (Tok Pisin)**

Narapela tumbuna stori em osem: bifo taim ol lain as ples blong mi wantaim ol narapela lain long said long mauten ol sa fait. Ol sa fait na ol - taim ol sa fait olsem antap long maunten i gatim wanpla meri, fetpela meri nogut tru. Em no inap long wokabaut na desa taim tu ol sa - ol angre na ol sa painim kaikai long kaikai nabaut. So, ol sampela faifpla man ol kisim meri ia na ol katim em katim em na ol kukim em. Ol kukim em na kaikaim em nau ol i kam daun osem. Ol i kam daun osem nau, ol birua ol ronim ol i kam daun. Ol i kam daun i kam kamap ogeta long aiwei rot na em ol lain bilong mi ol lukim na ol kilim ol displa faifpela lain. Nau, blad blí ol tanim osem wara na ron i go long bikpla wara. So nau long ples blong mipla disla hap we mipla sa wokií gaden na stap lo em, ol sa kolim Krokronte, bikos mining blong Krokronte em osem «ol bin kilim ol man na blat blí ol bin ran osem wara». Em tasol.

(Translation) Another traditional story goes like this: long ago my village clan together with another clan on the side of the mountain, they used to fight. They would fight and they - (once) when they fought like up the mountain there was one woman, a really fat woman. She couldn't walk, and at this time they would —they were hungry and they were looking for food to eat. So, five men caught the woman here and they cut her up (lit. they cut her and cut her) and they cooked her. They cooked her and ate her

(*) See the article by G.Smith for more about Tok Pisin in this volume, p. .

and came down here. They came down like this and their enemies chased them down. They came down right to the highway road and my clan saw and they killed these five. Now their blood turned to water and ran into the main river. So now at our village, this place where we make gardens and stay, they call Kronkronte, because the meaning of Kronkronte, it's (something) like «they killed the men and their blood flowed like a river». That's it.

[The only words of non-English origin in this text are *tumbuna* (ancestor), *kaikai* (eat, food), and *birua* (enemy). As for grammar, *i* often precedes a finite verb, *sa* is the habitual aspect marker, *bin* marks past and the suffix *—im* is the transitive marker. Personal pronouns are unmarked for case or gender: *mi* 'I/me', *em* 'he/she/it', *ol* 'they' (also optionally used to mark plurality), *mipela* (<fellow), in the text *mipla*, is '*we*' (me + a third person), and possessives are marked by *b(i)long* / *bli* (eg. *blong mipla* 'our', *bli ol* 'their'). *P(e)la* is also a suffix attached to determiners (*narapela*, *sampela*, *wanpela*, *displa*), to numerals (*faifpela*), and adjectives (*fetpela*, *bikpla*) *Nogut tru* is an intensifier, *long* is an all-purpose preposition, *wantaim* means 'with', *o(l)sem* 'like' (<all the same), *na* 'and', while the last phrase *em tasol* (<that's all) concludes the story.]

Geoff Smith
University of Hong Kong